

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 02134 011721Z

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, AG

SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION WITH ALGERIA

REF: STATE'S 214220

1. REFTEL REQUESTS: (A) FURTHER PRECISION REGARDING ALGERIAN THOUGHTS ABOUT AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION AND (B) REASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE REIMBURSABLE FOLLOW-ON AND SOME POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC BENEFIT FROM PROPOSED SURVEY TEAM VISIT.

2. WE WILL PROCEED TO SEEK MORE DETAILS FROM MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE BUT SUSPECT ALGERIANS WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY BEING MORE PRECISE UNTIL THEY HAVE CLEARER IDEA WHAT WE CAN DO FOR THEM. THERE IS ALSO RISK THAT WE MAY STIMULATE THEM TO DRAW UP FORMAL SHOPPING LIST THAT WILL BE BEYOND LIMITS OF ANYTHING WE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO DO. THAT IS WHY SENDING SURVEY TEAM HERE WILL RATHER BROAD GUIDELINES SEEMED TO US TO BE REASONABLE TO START. WE UNDERSTAND NEED FOR INFORMATION, HOWEVER, AND WILL PIN OUR REQUEST TO BOUKLI'S PROMISE(PARA 5 OF 1920) TO PRODUCE SOME INITIAL WORKING PAPERS.

3. OUR CHOICE OF WORD "BLUEPRINT" IN PARA 3 OF 1920 WAS UNFORTUNATE AND HAS BEEN TAKEN TOO LITERALLY BY OUR READERS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE ALGERIANS EXPECTING SURVEY TEAM TO PRODUCE

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PAGE 02 ALGIER 02134 011721Z

FEASIBILITY STUDY. RATHER, THEY WOULD LIKE TEAM TO LOOK AT

SITES ON THE GROUND AND TELL THEM BROADLY WHAT WE THINK CAN BE DONE WITH THEM AND HOW THEY CAN GET AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

4. AS FOR REIMBURSABLE FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITY, WE FEEL A LITTLE LIKE MAN WHOSE WIFE KEEPS ASKING TO BE ASSURED THAT HE LOVES HER. SHORT ANSWER IS, YES, WE THINK THERE REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF SUCH FOLLOW-ON, PROVIDING AMERICANS SUFFICIENTLY ENTERPRISING.

5. LONG ANSWER AS FOLLOWS: ON NUMBER OF OCCASIONS IN PAST (OUR 1212, 1236 AND 1920) WE HAVE NOTED THAT THERE IS IMPORTANT AGRICULTURE-RELATED MARKET HERE. ITS DIMENSIONS ARE INDICATED BY SIZE OF DRAVO AND MORRISON-KNUDSEN IRRIGATION AND SEED CLEANING PROJECTS. WHILE THESE ARE TWO SPECIAL CASES, ALGERIANS TEND TO THINK BIG, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THEIR REPORTED OFFER OF A \$2 BILLION AREA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TO BECHTEL. THEY NEED HELP WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS--FROM FINDING WATER AND IMPROVING SEED VARIETIES TO MARKETING. THEY ARE PREPARED TO PAY FOR HELP IN SOME OF THESE AREAS, PROVIDED THEY FEEL THEY ARE GETTING A SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY. THERE IS THUS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THE MARKET IS THERE, BUT TAPPING IT IS NOT EASY. IT TAKES PATIENCE, IMAGINATION, FLEXIBILITY AND DETERMINATION. IT TAKES THE RESOURCES TO SWEAT OUT PAYMENTS DELAYS AND PERSONNEL WHO CAN WORK IN A DIFFICULT ENVIRONMENT. IT IS NOT EVERY AGRIBUSINESS FIRM THAT IS UP TO THE CHALLENGE, BUT THERE IS NO INHERENT REASON WHY A FIRM WITH INTELLIGENT AND VIGOROUS LEADERSHIP AND AN OPEN MIND CANNOT FIND PROFITABLE CONTRACTS HERE. WE THINK SURVEY TEAM SHOULD UNCOVER NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THIS RESPECT.

6. THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FOLLOW-ON PARTICIPATION BY USG AGENCIES ON REIMBURSABLE BASIS ARE LESS CLEAR. THE ALGERIANS, OF COURSE, ARE INTERESTED IN GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT COOPERATION AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL AND WE CAN READILY VISUALIZE THEM, FOR INSTANCE, SENDING PEOPLE TO THE US TO STUDY AND LEARN TECHNIQUES SUCH AS HYBRID CORN PRODUCTION. WE ARE UNEASY ABOUT THE IDEA OF BRINGING US TECHNICIANS HERE FOR ANY EXTENDED PERIOD, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY IN ANY NUMBERS, EVEN THOUGH THE ALGERIANS MAY WANT THEM AND MAY BE WILLING TO PAY. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ALGIER 02134 011721Z

TO BEGIN WITH, THER ARE THE USUAL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PROBLEMS POSED WHENEVER IT IS A QUESTION OF USG PERSONNEL ABROAD--PROBLEMS WHICH WE JUDGE INSOLUBLE HERE, GIVEN THE CURRENT WAGE SCALE IN THE USG AND GIVEN THE SIZE OF THIS EMBASSY AND ITS ALREADY SEVERE ADMINISTRATIVE LIMITATIONS. SECONDLY, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THERE ARE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF USG TECHNICIANS ON THE GROUND HERE WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE LOOKED AT CAREFULLY BEFORE ANY

DECISION WAS TAKEN. FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS WE THINK IT MORE APPROPRIATE TO LOOK TO U.S. BUSINESS TO DO THE WORK, AND VISUALIZE THE USG'S ROLE OF BEING THAT OF CATALYST AND PROMOTER, NOT EXECUTANT.

7. WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC BENEFITS, IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING, OF COURSE, THAT IT IS HELPFUL TO US TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO EXPRESSIONS OF ALGERIAN INTEREST OF THIS SORT. FURTHERMORE, WE TAKE IT AS AXIOMATIC THAT THE MORE TIES WE HAVE WITH ALGERIA OF THE SORT ALREADY ESTABLISHED BY AMERICAN BUSINESS, THE BETTER. AMERICAN BUSINESS PARTICIPATION IN ALGERIAN DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE LONG RUN SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ALGERIAN MENTALITY. WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT IT WILL CHANGE ALGERIAN BEHAVIOR AT THE UN OR ELSEWHERE, BUT WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF SUPPLANTING THE SOVIETS AND EUROPEANS AS THE MAJOR SOURCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND MODERNIZATION IDEAS IN THIS COUNTRY. ONE IMMEDIATELY APPARENT RESULT IS THE GREAT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ALGERIAN STUDENTS GOING TO THE UNITED STATES. WE ESTIMATE THERE WILL BE ABOUT 1200 THIS YEAR, MOST OF THEM STUDYING TECHNICAL SUBJECTS. (ALMOST NONE OF THEM ARE STUDYING AGRICULTURE, A FIELD IN WHICH OUR WORLD PREDOMINANCE IS CLEAR, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT HAD MUCH EXPOSURE TO OUR AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY.) IN THE LONG RUN, WE BELIEVE THIS EXPOSURE TO UNITED STATES AND TO AMERICAN IDEAS CANNOT HELP BUT HAVE A POSITIVE RESULT. EVEN IF THE ALGERIANS DO NOT END UP LIKING US, AT LEAST WE WILL BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE BETTER.

8. COMMENT. ALGERIANS INTEREST IN OUR AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY IS NOT NEW. THEY HAVE FOR SOME YEARS BENEFITED FROM A MODEST FORD FOUNDATION PROGRAM INTRODUCING NEW WHEAT STRAINS AND HELPING THEM COMBAT THE BAYUDH DISEASE IN DATE PLANTATIONS. THAT INTEREST WAS GIVEN A BOOST BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 ALGIER 02134 011721Z

VISIT OF APPOLLO-SOYUZ ASTRONAUTS, WHO FIRED UP ALGERIAN IMAGINATIONS ABOUT POSSIBILITIES OF REMOTE SENSING (SOMETHING SECRETARIAT OF STATE FOR HYDRAULICS ALREADY KNEW ABOUT AND REGARDING WHICH IT WAS NEGOTIATING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY). IT WAS GIVEN A FURTHER BOOST BY VISIT OF TECHNICAL SALES SEMINAR HEADED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE LONG. SERIOUSNESS OF THAT INTEREST WAS INDICATED BY THE LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF AGRICULTURE, BOUKLI, REPORTED IN OUR 1453. SUCH LETTER WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN AND CLEARED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY WITHOUT SOME DELIBERATION. BELIEVE WE ARE FACED WITH A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO WIN A MARKET AND TO INFLUENCE LOCAL ATTITUDES.

9. FOR OUR PART, IT WAS THE AMERICANS WHO SUGGESTED SURVEY TEAM AS A MEANS OF GETTING A LITTLE MORE PRECISION INTO

DIALOGUE. IF WE DO NOT GO AHEAD WITH IT, WE RISK BEING
CONSIDERED FOURFLUSHER BY THE ALGERIANS.

10. WE WOULD WELCOME VISIT BY FAUGHT, BUT SENSE THAT IT
WOULD MEAN POSTPONEMENT OF VISIT BY SURVEY TEAM. WOULD
PREFER THAT USG CONCENTRATE ON ASSEMBLING SMALL, BROAD-
GAUGED GROUP OF EXPERTS TO COME OUT HERE AND LOOK GROUND

OVER FOR SEVERAL WEEKS AND SEE WHAT THEY THINK. BELIEVE
WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THERE IS NO COMMITMENT, IMPLIED
OR OTHERWISE, TO IMPLEMENT ANYTHING AND THAT PURPOSE
IS JUST WHAT THE NAME IMPLIES--A SURVEY. PARKE

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